

"The most sacred part of all Katēlū is a tract just inland from the men's house. This is said to be the site of the ancient men's house which was in use in Maur's time. It is now covered with a thick growth that includes some tall trees, evidence that it has been long unoccupied. This Katēlū is strictly tabu except, nominally, to chiefs; and we never saw even a chief set foot on the central part of it, where the old building stood. All that remains of that is a few vertical slabs, some of them apparently stone corner-posts like those in the present building, while others may be backrest stones; and a terrace or platform strewn with coral gravel and outlined with coral blocks. This is like any other house platform except for a few other lines of blocks at one side, suggesting a bit of terracing which may have constituted a formal entrance.

Maroligar, who acted as caretaker of all Katēlū, did some weeding and trimming about the edges of this part of it, but we never saw him venture on the old platform. The only violation of its sanctity that we did see was by the psychotic called, for short, Tarof. He was subject to outbursts of obstreperous and sometimes violent conduct. On hearing that he had impiously trespassed on the overgrown, tabu site of the old men's house, a group of agitated men, mostly relatives who felt some responsibility for his conduct, gathered at the edge of the overgrown tract. They called to him to come out, and rebuked him for his presumption, but did not venture in after him. This was not from fear of violence on his part, for some of these same men more than once tied him hand and foot after other outbursts. It was from reverence for the sacred site, respect

1: Burrows--135-136
116, 778, 784

(1947-48)

Woleaians-2
Ifalik

for the tabu, and awe of the spirits of ancient chiefs who are supposed to punish trespassers.

Violation of this tabu by Spiro and me was punished by these spirits. Our camp was on Katēlū, just south of the present men's house and west, or shoreward, of the site of the old one. Our only toilet facilities, at first, were the lagoon and what the navy calls an overwater head, which could be entered only by walking along an unsquared coconut log set at rather a steep angle. The lagoon [136] was well enough, part of the time; but since, unlike the natives, we had to change clothes to wade into it, it was often inconvenient. After one attempt to negotiate the log leading to the overwater head, which ended in an ignominious leap into the water, I gave up trying to use that; and for Spiro, if I remember rightly, a look at it was enough. The only concealment near our tent was the foliage on the overgrown part of Katēlū. We took to using the edges of that, part of the time. Maroligar delicately dissuaded us by intertwining the leaves of the young coconuts about the old site, forming a flimsy barrier, which is a traditional tabu sign. The hint was not lost on us, but now and then, under pressure of time and when we thought we were unobserved, we disregarded it.

About that time came a period of rainy, gusty weather. The chiefs decided that it was visited on Ifalik by the spirits of the old chiefs to show their indignation at the violation of their sanctuary. So they had the overwater head moved to a new position, beside a stone pier that projects into the lagoon; and built a short, level approach, so

1: Burrows--135-136
116, 778, 784

(1947-48)

Woleaians-3
Ifalik

that there was no longer any difficulty about using it. Then they had Tom explain the whole situation to us, and ask us to use the new facility. This seems worth telling, not as a funny anecdote, still less as a confession of what now seems stupidity on our part; but rather as an illustration, first, of how the sentiment of rank may work out in conduct, and second, of the diplomacy shown by the chiefs in persuading foreigners to respect their rules."

1: Burrows--136
116, 778, 784, 565

(1947-48)

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Two other sites share, but in much lesser degree, some of the sanctity attributed to Katēlū. One is the homestead Uelepī, traditional residence of the senior lineage of Kovalū clan, whose members succeed to the highest chiefly title. This site is said to be tabu to all but relatives. Except for men of other clans who live there by virtue of marriage to women of this line, we did not hear of outsiders trespassing on it (except the psychotic Tarof on one of his rampages). A similar site, no longer occupied and of less importance but still respected, as far as we know, was Bwagolei, just inland from Katēlū. This is the traditional homestead of the senior lineage of SauvelārIk clan, holder of the second chiefly title. Tom took me there by virtue of his membership in that lineage, and did his best to make it out as practically equivalent to Uelepī."

"The visible trappings of religion on Ifalik, like nearly all their artifacts are extremely simple. The so-called 'house of the gods' at Weluāra differs neither in appearance nor use from any other dwelling. The most distinctive building on the atoll, the men's house at Katēlū, has indeed some religious significance. The equipment for Maroligar's special ritual, described on p. _____, is kept there, and a cloth commonly hangs on the front wall as an offering to a god. But the symbolism of this building, as shown in the chapter on government, emphasizes human rank and authority more than religion.

Most conspicuous of religious emblems are what I have called shrines on some of the house platforms, just outside one end - the western end in every case I noticed - of a dwelling. These are little round flower-beds, about a yard in diameter, spread with clean, smooth sand that contrasts with the coral gravel of the rest of the platform. They are called tariaga (once recorded as tariege), but if Tom and I managed to understand each other on this point, the general word for flowers (mware), is also sometimes applied to them. The plants grown on them emphasize verdure and fragrance rather than blossoms: the large 'elephant-ear' leaves of true tar (wot) also prized as food; an occasional sprouting coconut, with leaves two or three feet high; and various aromatic shrubs, such as warung. During a ceremony the greenery was supplemented by a whole fresh coconut leaf and a leafy shoot of aro, stuck into the sand.

Most elaborate of these shrines is that for the great gods at Weluāra. In addition

1: Burrows--194
116, 778, 353, 824

(1947-48)

Woleaians-2
Ifalik

to the plants, four rods called guruguru, the general name for walking-stick, are stuck into the sand, projecting to various heights. There is one each for the four great gods: Aluelap, Lugeilang, Wolfat, and Tiliir. They are painted or dyed in various colors: one red, one white, one in broad horizontal bands of alternating flame-color and a very dark green, nearly black. The pigment for the flame-colored bands is the prized rang or baked turmeric, imported from one of the high islands."

1: Burrows--194-195
116, 778, 782

(1947-48)

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Another conspicuous religious emblem is the timás, a mat of white young coconut leaf a little more than a foot square, with the pointed ends of the leaflets projecting along one side in a stiff fringe. Numbers of these are plaited by the young men, taken to the house of the god - or sometimes elsewhere - to be endowed with divine power, then hung all about the shores of the inhabited islets. They are suspended from branches which overhang either the beach or - on the lagoon side - the water itself.

The ceremony of blessing these timás is brief, and not of itself an occasion for assembling the whole population. At Weluāra it sometimes accompanies one of the [195] regular ceremonies of invocation. In that case the prayer or incantation that confers power on the squares of mat is part of the regular song of invocation. Once the sound of a conch horn, blowing from FalārIk district, was explained as part of a ceremony of blessing timás. We were told it would be over before we could get there. Whether the usual hymn was also used on that occasion is not certain.

Once in position facing the shore, the squares of mat can be seen from some distance at sea, especially when they are fresh and of a bright ivory color, contrasting with their green background of leaves. They are thought to act as talismans and keep off evil sea-spirits."

1: Burrows--195
116, 789, 778

(1947-48)

Woleaians
Ifalik

"Visible emblems (Sinnbilder) accompany invocation to certain particular gods, according to Sarfert. That for Lugweilang is a paddle with two coconut leaves tied about its handle. The adze-head had formerly been used when Lauiliār was invoked, or rather exorcised - for the object was to prevent the rainbow-god from destroying canoes at sea. But this adze-head had been washed out to sea in the typhoon of 1907. Carpenters invoking Alulumar used a dancing-staff (guruguru) with a strip of coconut leaflet tied about one end. Maroligar used one of the few carved dancing-staffs seen as a walking-stick, but I never saw it used in connection with the repairs to canoe-houses that he supervised; and when I asked him if he knew how I could get a specimen of such a staff, he readily gave me one of the two he owned. He would hardly have done this if the staff had been a sacred emblem."

1: Burrows--195-196
116, 778, 178

(1947-48)

Woleaians 1.2
Ifalik

"For Aluluei, god of navigation, Sarfert found two emblems: a wooden anthropomorphic figure, and a conch-shell horn. Tom's mention of such wooden figures, and his statement that none exist on Ifalik any more, has been noted in the account of navigation. As senior navigator of the island, Tom owned a conch horn; and blew it while singing his incantation to ward off storms. But he did not mention its use in connection with invocations of gods of navigation, though he gave me the texts of a series of prayers of invocations to them.

Curiously, the only other emblems of this kind we saw in use were connected with a deity who, according to Sarfert, had no special ceremony of invocation - Paluelap. The emblems or insignia were of two kinds: strips of white young coconut leaf, which were waved over the hull of a canoe about to set out for another island, then tied around the end-posts; and a mature coconut in its husk, with a strip of leaflet knotted about it. This was knocked along the seams of the hull as the navigator waded about the canoe, singing his prayer or incantation.

Some of the difference between Sarfert's information and mine is obviously due to the fact that neither of us got the whole story. Part of it, though, probably reflects change in the culture during the thirty-eight years between the two visits. Knowledge of this part of the religious lore was confined to a few even in Sarfert's time (and probably always had been). The invocations to Lauiliär, he was told, were known only to two men. Details reported to him in 1909 may well have gone out of use by 1947. This seems

1: Burrows--195-196
116, 778, 178

(1947-48)

Woleaians-2
Ifalik

particularly likely in the case of visible emblems of which we saw nothing. It was explicitly stated by Tom of the wooden images formerly used by navigators.

On the other hand, the whole cult of Tlltr may have arisen since Sarfert's visit. This god is not mentioned at all in the German monograph, nor in any of the myths we collected. The only texts that refer specifically to him are the hymn of invocation and a healing prayer or incantation that Gargeligar gave to Spiro. Both are said to have been revealed by the god to Gargeligar, who was not an old man in 1947; and of part of the invocation (but not all that includes mention of Tlltr) it is specifically stated that this was the first revelation. [196]

More substantial than this admittedly conjectural interpretation of differences between the two accounts is the fact that, so far as general patterns of behavior are concerned, they corroborate each other."

"One of the most prominent pieces of religious equipment of Ifalik today is obviously recent - a U.S. Navy boatswain's whistle (or, ashore in the United States, a policeman's whistle). Its shrill sound, with a rattle or trill in it because the flow of air is interrupted by a pellet, closely resembles the vocal sound supposed to be the call of a god. Without a whistle, this sound is produced by a prolonged falsetto cry, trilled with the tip of the tongue as in 'rolling an R.' Apparently this vocal symbol is ancient in the culture: in the myth about the lore of seamanship, when the god Seilangi appeared to Langorik in the form of a bird, he uttered this cry. (Tom, in telling the story, gave a demonstration.) The close resemblance of this call to the sound of a boatswain's whistle made that artifact fit readily into the native culture, but with a meaning very different from what it carries when blown by a Navy boatswain or a traffic policeman. In Linton's terminology, this is a little case of diffusion accelerated by congruity, and accompanied by a change in role and meaning.

Gargeligar had one of these whistles. Its sound at night was usually the first indication to us that the gods were abroad again. Wolpetau, paramount chief, had one too. He held it in his mouth and blew it occasionally during performances of religious dances, when he walked behind the rows of dancers, holding up a bit of tobacco or other little gifts which anyone was privileged to snatch from his hand. The suggestion seems to be that these are gifts of the gods. Attribution of divinity to the chief himself was never suggested, and would surely be denied. For that matter other chiefs, and even

commoners, might distribute gifts in that way if they wished. At least once, Tom took that road to the glory he craved.

Another occasion for blowing the whistles was during one of the nightly rehearsals of the uru dances. According to an ancient custom, women, muffled from head to foot in cloths, came up behind the dancers, and each put a garland on the head of the man of her choice. The complete wrapping-up was explained as a disguise, so that neither the favored men nor the woman's husband could recognize her. If the husband found out, Tom explained, he would be very angry. This institutionalization of jealousy must be left to Spiro to interpret. As to the religious significance of the whistles, it is diffuse and dim. I got no verbal explanation. All that is sure is that the whole performance, song, dance, and all, is essentially a religious ritual. As already noted, it seems to be taken lightly; and the blowing of the whistles may have no more vital connection with the supernatural than the costumes of ghosts and witches worn by children, among us, at Hallowe'en.

A final use of the whistles may have no religious significance at all. At least two of the whistles were sounded one night - and with them, conch trumpets - from canoes on the lagoon, surrounding a circle of seines in which a school of bonito was impounded. So far as I learned, these were simply noise-makers to frighten the fish and keep them from escaping. As noted in the account of fishing, it did not work. The point here is that these instruments seem to be not restricted to sacred uses."

2: Damm et al, --173
116, 502, 778

(1909) 1938

Woleaians
Faraulep

Kr mer obtained an old string pouch with snail shells; it belonged to the head chief, and was considered to be holy. It hung from the ridge pole of the canoe house, and was supposed to have been used to teach navigation in former times; the snail shells represented islands (or stars?).

In our day we did not actually find any sacred buildings, but the imaliēlus, "the house of the spirits," [279] of Eangelaf (see Kotzebue, Entdeckungsreise... page 57, name of the god: Engalap) shown in Figure 126 [VMM: see source] and located near the im Marúaru on Tagaulap clearly points in the direction of old sanctuaries although the house itself in this particular instance is attributed to foreign influence. Raketip and his wife Lēta-go came to Tagaulap from Faróelap (Fároilap) where Uapei was worshipped as alus. They remained on the island and erected the im ali ēlus. After many years Raketip and his wife returned to Faroelap. Here too, Eangelaf (Volea) was a secondary deity, and small containers of oil with vut wreaths were hung up on the house beam. On Falalis in the house Moelifal, Iletilimar was looked upon as alus.

6: Senfft--55
116, 502, 778

(no date) 1905

Woleaians
Woleai
Lamotrek

Like many European sailors, these native seafarers are superstitious. Thus it was the custom formerly that a talisman for the wind ("Windmann") was taken along for every expedition. This lioss was a figure made of baked coral limestone which represented the upper part of a man's body; four spines from the tail of ray formed the legs, and a coconut leaf was wound around the neck.

28: Spiro--65
116, 346, 778

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians-1-2
Ifalik

"Though Tilitr dwells in Fatuma, he and his sons have shrines on Ifaluk, to which they often descend. Of the eight shrines, seven are for Tilitr or his sons. (28)"

"28. [See following sheet for footnote 28.]"

"28. [Footnote p. 65] There is one shrine in Felarik, Bwutaliwenol, in the lineage house of Nuteitei for the son of Tilitr, Wuluaro. In Rauau, there are two shrines: Bwuter Tilitr, the shrine of Tilitr, which is inside the public house, the fanap of Atelu, and Bwuter Tiliwetan, the shrine of Tiliwetan, a son of Tilitr, that is in the courtyard of the lineage of the Uelepi house. There are four shrines in Falalap: Bwuter Talewearo, a son of Solal, and Bwuter Tilitr. Except for two of these, the shrines are merely circular mounds of white, smooth sand, surrounded on its circumference by rocks, with a medicine plant or two in the center. In case of illness, tobacco or even lavalavas may be offered to the alus to help exorice the alusengau. The shrines are made of sand because Tilitr does not like place 'all same wet and stink', which is the earth. He likes only dry and clean places.

The main shrine is Bwuter Tilitr in Falalap, for here all the major ceremonies are held. It, too, is a shrine of sand, but in addition has four upright sticks, which represent Aluelap; Lugeiligg, his son; Olophat, his grandson; and Tilitr.

Bwuter Tilitr in Rauau is in the fanap, and is a platform, with sides about a foot high, on which are placed tobacco, and from its upright poles always hang offerings of lavalavas.

In Falalap one shrine is a small model house, in which hang offerings of lavalavas."

"The people returned to their homes, work and sexual relations being taboo. The next day there was to be a feast, and that night the men went fishing after the appearance of the moon. The next morning the men resumed their fishing, while the women prepared taro and breadfruit. (Dr. Burrows and I contributed two tines of beef). It was not until late afternoon that we started for Falalap. As we approached we saw the women sitting around the shrine singing, while making garlands. The possessed man was still semi-delirious and would break into song at unpredictable intervals.

The shrine was then completely encircled by garlands, after which others were distributed among all the people assembled. Arogeligar announced that the alus had informed him that the American visitors were very fine men, and that they should receive garlands.

The chiefs then gave their permission to begin eating. This time, the sexes were not spearated, because the people sat in family groups, except for the chiefs who ate together with the ethnographers. At the conclusion of the meal, the people disbanded and returned to their homes."

114 of the wooden packing boxes were converted into sets of shelves. The
123 cases of food were piled along the sides in the back part of the house, which became the kitchen area, cozily walled with cartons of sliced peaches and spam.

778 There was an altar in the back part of the Fan Nap that was a con-
353 stant mental hazard because we did not want to offend the local people by desecrating this shrine with profane objects. The altar was a ramshackle affair, contrasting strongly with the usual Ifalukian workmanship, and this may have indicated that it was not taken very seriously; but we wanted to run no risk of giving offense. There was a large chest there, too, which we judged to be a sort of depository for the appurtenances of government. Among other things, the American flag was stored in the chest, to be hauled out and attached to a pole on the lagoon shore when a ship was sighted.

831 There was another sacred touch to the Fan Nap—a phallus attached
778 to the main front center post and pointing out across the lagoon. The phallus, which pointed westward toward Woleai, the nearest neighboring atoll, commemorated an event of Ifaluk legend—or history. The story was one of violence and conquest and seemed curiously anomalous in the Ifalukian folklore, contrasting as it did with the present completely non-aggressive and peaceful character of the people. Ted
[187] thought that it might reflect memories of an actual conquest by the people of Ifaluk of earlier inhabitants of the neighboring atolls. Maur,
[173] the main character in the legend, was certainly the "culture hero" of the people of the island.

The phallus did not seem to be the object of any special veneration or cult—it was just there. Once, later in the summer, when we were trying to explain the money system of the United States, we were questioned about the portrait heads on the coins. Don explained Washington and Lincoln as long-dead "chiefs" thus commemorated.

1769 Yani got the idea at once. "Ifaluk have picture of dead chief, too," he said, grinning, as he pointed toward the phallus of Maur on the Fan Nap.

132 The weather continued to interfere with the starting of field work. Friday it rained almost continuously all day—and of course the rain

597 until it is able to walk, but the adopting mother shares the care and
844 affections from the beginning; and when the baby is able to walk, it moves officially into the household of the adopting parents.

593 The child thus really acquires an extra set of parents, since it con-
597 tinues all through life to have close association with its real parents as well as with its adopting parents. The child acquires extra sets of "brothers" and "sisters" as well. Don found some difficulty with the word "brother" in teaching English since, while the Ifalukians all knew who were blood brothers and who were not, the matter seemed of little importance to them.

Our friend Yani, for instance, and his wife, Letaweriur, had three children. His oldest had been adopted into his mother's household, Soumat, and his next into his father's household (since his father was a re-married widower with no children by the second wife). Only the youngest had he kept to himself. Yet Yani was with all of his children every day. In this case, Yani and his wife, although they officially belonged in her household, Falepenach, spent most of their time in the Soumat household, since it was less crowded. This sort of casualness gave us a great deal of trouble with that census.

126 But this is straying from the problem of trying to get the Falarik
133 trails down on the base map. With the broad highway and the canoe
487 houses as fixed points of reference, we started to map the principal trails across the island. Falarik was a crescent, following the curve of the circular atoll reef; it was a little over a mile long, with an average width of about 300 yards. There were a dozen or so trails across the island from the inhabited, lagoon side, to the outer, ocean side.

The first of these, taking off from the canoe house beside the Fan Nap, began as a "highway" rather than a "trail." Like the broad highway, it was a wide, straight path, marked on both sides by lines of moss-covered coral rocks. On the left side of this trail was the dense vegetation of Katelu, the sacred site of the ancient Men's House which
• [178] was in use in the time of Maur, the island's "culture hero." This sacred spot was never entered by anyone except Maroligar, who was its official custodian. As a result, it was a wild tangle of natural vegetation.
[43] At one point on the path by Katelu was a large, fresh-water pool in which Fagolier, the paramount chief, sometimes bathed. On the right

CHAPTER VI

FISH WATCHING

DANCE rehearsals continued almost every night, and it was clear that we were expected to attend despite the interference with both work and sleep. Somehow I didn't understand until some time later that this dance business was largely a response to a request of Ted's. He had particularly wanted, during his first stay on the island, to see some of the important traditional dances, the ur dances, but no such ceremonies had taken place. Before we started for Ifaluk this time, Ted had written to the anthropologist of the Trust Territory Government, expressing the hope that we would be there in the proper season for the dances. The anthropologist had passed the word on to the chiefs by way of the trade ship which called at the island about a month before we arrived.

It turned out that we were too late. The proper time for the ur dances is at the close of the period of ceremonial fishing by torchlight for flying fish. But the Ifalukians, wishing to please Ted, rearranged their ceremonial schedule. They couldn't bring the flying fish out of season, but they could perform the dances.

The dances were really, as Ted explained, a religious ceremonial designed to please the gods. But, as Ted further noted, this did not mean that the content had to take some special religious form: the kindly gods of Ifaluk enjoyed whatever interested the people.

Religion seemed in general very unobtrusive on Ifaluk. There were sacred spots like the altar in the back of the Fan Nap (completely unused during our stay); there was the wild tangle of vegetation in sacred

● 778 Katelu where Maur's spirit lingered; there was a tiny, thatched "god house" in the Valul household area on Falalap; and an immaculate, sanded circular altar as part of the Weluar household area. We called [793] Arueligar the "high priest" because he had the highest ecclesiastical authority on the island, officiating at the few religious ceremonies we observed. Husky, handsome Truesai was his designated successor.

121 Ted, both in 1948 and in 1953, devoted much time to collecting notes [198] on religious beliefs. He felt that these beliefs were steadily weakening, that he could notice a difference in this respect between his 1948 and 776 1953 visits. The gods, however, were still with us in 1953; alus, spirits, who haunted certain places, governed various natural events, and interfered for good or evil in the affairs of men. Ted collected a list of nine high gods, and of dozens of lesser spirits. He found, for instance, [502] twenty-seven different alus concerned with different matters in connection with navigation and canoe building—though these, to be sure, [396] are basic activities, much subject to divine guidance in any maritime culture.

771 My impression, however, based mostly on Ted's writings, notes and comments, is that the Ifalukians were far from having an organized theology. The accounts of divine affairs that Ted got from Arueligar and from the chiefs did not always agree; and most people apparently gave little thought to such matters, leaving them to the chiefs and the specialists. The alus were present, all right, but accepted as a part of the natural order of things: the spirits that every folk find in the world around them.

775 The vast majority of the alus were spirits of the dead. No one died [761] while I was on Ifaluk, but Ted and Mel Spiro observed four deaths [755] during their 1948 stay. They have described these in their book on Ifaluk: the intense preoccupation on the part of friends and relatives, with trying to save a seriously ill person by every natural or supernatural means, the nightly wailing chants, the great seriousness surrounding possible death, and the abrupt relaxation of this seriousness once death has occurred, once the alus has left the body. They ascribe this attitude to the firm belief in the continuity of the soul.

764 The body of the dead, however, is given ceremonial treatment: the face is painted red, a new loin-cloth or skirt is put on, and then the